



# News Release

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## **STATE'S NEW ANTI-SMOKING ADS TAKE ON THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY REVEAL HYPOCRISY OF "MAKEOVER" CAMPAIGN**

SACRAMENTO – Launching an attack against the tobacco industry, the California Department of Health Services (DHS) has begun running a series of 14 ads that boldly counter the tobacco industry's unrelenting presence in California.

"California's new ads graphically show the realities of tobacco use and the hypocrisy of the tobacco industry's contrived and manipulative image campaign," said State Health Director Diana M. Bontá, R.N., Dr.P.H. "We are fighting an industry that spends millions of dollars per year trying to convince the public that it has turned over a new leaf. At the same time, however, it is spending billions of dollars to market, sell and addict consumers to a product that kills, disables and destroys."

"Californians should not be fooled by the claims of tobacco companies that things have changed, and that they now care about you and the community," said Bontá. "If they really cared, tobacco companies would admit that they have been manipulating nicotine levels for years so that smokers have little 'personal choice.' Their product, when used as directed, kills one out of every three users."

The new ads – seven television, four radio and three print – target general market, African American, Asian/Pacific Islander and Hispanic communities. The TV ads are as follows:

- In "Crocodile Tears," a smug cartoon crocodile represents the tobacco industry. He insists that he has changed for the better by doing good things in the community. However, when asked why he is still selling cigarettes, the crocodile fumes and stomps off the screen.
- "Bedroom," which was developed for the Asian/Pacific Islander community, shows a couple's intimacy compromised by impotence as a result of the husband's smoking habit.
- In "Taps," which is aimed at the African-American community, a son reminisces about his heroic father and the effect of his father's death from smoking on the family.

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- Two new ads feature the return of “Debi,” a laryngectomy patient who appeared in a previous ad smoking through a tracheotomy opening in her throat. In the first, she discusses her decision to quit smoking for the sake of her 7-year-old niece. In the second, Debi tells of her addiction to smoking and how the tobacco industry lied in claiming that tobacco wasn't addictive.

Since May 1999, DHS has released 42 television, radio, outdoor and print ads. Of those, 31 were released this year.

In October 1989, the Tobacco Tax and Health Protection Act of 1988 (Proposition 99), was established with 20 percent of the tax revenue funding the California Tobacco Control Program – the world's first comprehensive tobacco control program. Since the passage of Proposition 99, adult smoking prevalence in California has declined by nearly one-third to 18.0 percent in 1999, substantially lower than the nationwide average of 25 percent. Moreover, per capita cigarette consumption has plummeted by more than 52 percent and over the past 10 years has declined at more than twice the rate of any other state.